

Flags

press packet

59 59 THEATERS PRESENTS **THE NEW YORK PREMIERE**

"MULKEY'S PERFORMANCE IS NOTHING LESS THAN STIRRING" LA WEEKLY

CHRIS MULKEY * KAREN LANDRY

FLAGS

STEPHEN MENDILLO * RYAN JOHNSTON * STEVEN KLEIN

BY JANE MARTIN
DIRECTED BY HENRY WISHCAMPER

SEPTEMBER 12 - SEPTEMBER 30

59 59 THEATERS PRESENTS **THE NEW YORK PREMIERE**

CHRIS MULKEY * KAREN LANDRY

FLAGS

BY JANE MARTIN
DIRECTED BY HENRY WISHCAMPER

STEPHEN MENDILLO * RYAN JOHNSTON * STEVEN KLEIN

IAN REEFORD * KYLE JOHNSTON * YVANS JOURRAIN * QUONTA BEANLEY

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER: SUELLY BELLEFLORE **SET DESIGN: KELLY SHANNON** **COSTUME DESIGN: ANNE BUNNETT**

LIGHTING DESIGN: MERRILL YILOFA CROWNE **SOUND DESIGN: CRAIGAN JOHNSON** **VIDEO DESIGN: ALISON KATYNE**

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS: ROBERT G. MCKELLEY NICK ROYCE

Pulitzer Prize-nominated playwright Jane Martin's *Flags* uses the structure of a Greek tragedy to explore how the grief of a single American family must inevitably ripple through us all. It is "a chilling account of one family's loss in the Iraq war... a first-rate portrayal of an American tragedy... no debate here and no lectures" (Hollywood Reporter).

The East Coast Premiere of the award-winning Los Angeles production stars real-life husband and wife Chris Mulkey (North Country, Radio) and Karen Landry (Puff Books, Sa'heel Show), NY veteran Stephen Mendillo (Paul Newman's Our Sons, Empire Falls), Ryan Johnston, and Steven Klein.

"EXPERTLY CRAFTED"
*Reprint courtesy of Actors Equity Association

59 59 THEATERS
59 EAST 59TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10022
www.59e59.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
Paid
New York, NY
Permit No. 3741

SEPTEMBER 12 - SEPTEMBER 30

\$10 TUE - SAT 8:00, SUN 6:30 & 9:30 2:30
\$18 (50&50 MEMBERS \$12.00)

"COMPELLING, SCATHING AND IRONIC"
HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

BUY TICKETS IN PERSON AT
59E59 THEATERS BOX OFFICE
59 EAST 59TH STREET (PARK/MADISON)
SUBWAY 4/5/6 N/R/W TO 59TH ST
BY PHONE 212-279-4200
ONLINE WWW.TICKETCENTRAL.COM

Contents:

- Press Release;
- Program;
- Press Excerpts; and
- Los Angeles Times* feature article.



EAST-COAST PREMIERE OF JANE MARTIN'S AWARD-WINNING "FLAGS" SET TO STIR ELECTION YEAR HEARTS & MINDS AT 59E59

Flags, a fierce political drama by the Pulitzer Prize-nominated **Jane Martin** that tells the story of a working-class American family and their loss of a son in Iraq, is set for its east-coast premiere at 59e59, presented by the Firefly Theater. Performances begin Wednesday, September 12 for a limited engagement through Sunday, September 30.

Originally commissioned by the Guthrie Theater and premiered at Mixed Blood, *Flags* went on to an acclaimed three-month run in Los Angeles at the Odyssey Theatre. This fall, the Firefly Theater will bring **Chris Mulkey** and **Karen Landry**, who originated the lead roles at Mixed Blood and the Odyssey, along with the other stars of the LA run, to 59e59.

In *Flags*, **Jane Martin** uses the structure of a Greek tragedy to explore how the grief of a single American family must inevitably ripple through us all. The hero is Eddie, a Vietnam vet and lifelong garbage collector, who is outraged when he learns that his eldest son Carter, a military specialist, has been killed and mutilated after reassignment to garbage duty cleaning the streets of Baghdad. A military Chaplain brings Eddie and his wife a US flag, and, in his absent-minded grief, Eddie hangs it on his roof upside down, a military signal of distress. Eddie's choices and his refusal to right the flag when community members demand it lead to first local and then national controversy and media attention. In stubbornness, his act of resistance eventually leads to the very violence it protests, putting the safety of his remaining family in jeopardy and ultimately leading to deeper tragedy.

Variety called *Flags* "...an expertly crafted work that performs a keen dissection and analysis" with an "outstanding ensemble," while *Hollywood Reporter* called it "...a compelling, scathing and ironic account that skillfully mines personal heartbreak, loss, disillusion and sacrifice... a first-rate portrayal of an American tragedy" with "no debate here and no lectures." The *LA Weekly* said "Jane Martin's play, *Flags*, takes an inside-out look at our most potent national symbol, discovering in its fluttering shadow a divided neighborhood of opinion on what constitutes loyalty in time of war... Mulkey's performance is nothing less than stirring, a word seldom found these days in discussions about theatre, much less about our national conduct."

The playwright **Jane Martin** is best known for *Kelly and Du* and *Jack and Jill*, which both won the American Theatre Critics Association Award for Best New Play. Other plays include *Talkin With* (premiered at the Actors Theatre of Louisville's 1981 Humana Festival of New American Plays and bowed to New York at Manhattan Theatre Club); *Vital Signs* (1990 Humana Festival of New American Plays); *Cementville* (1991 Humana Festival); *Flaming Guns of the Purple Sage* (2001 Humana Festival); and *Good Boys*, which premiered at Guthrie Theater in 2002. Her work has not been brought Off-Broadway since MTC's 1982 production of *Talking With*.

This will mark award-winning director **Henry Wishcamper's** first collaboration with Martin and Firefly Theater. His previous work has included, among others, *Elvis People* (New World Stages), *The Polish Play*, *A Conflation of Macbeth* by William Shakespeare and *Ubu Roi* by Alfred Jarry (Katharsis Theater Company), *Pullman Car Hiawatha* (Keen Company; Drama Desk Nomination for Outstanding Revival of a Play; Time Out New York Top 10 Productions of 2004), *The Good Thief* (Portland Stage Company), *The Flying Doctor and The Imaginary Cuckold* (Roundtable Ensemble), *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (HERE), and numerous Shakespeare productions at the Maine Summer Dramatic Institute/Shakespeare. He served as the assistant director on the Broadway productions of *Shining City* (directed by Robert Falls), *Absurd Person Singular* (directed by John Tilling) and *Match* (directed by Nicholas Martin); he is the Artistic Director of Katharsis

Theater Company; he served as the Artistic Director of the Maine Summer Dramatic Institute in Portland, Maine (1997-1999) and as the Artistic Associate of Keen Company (2002-2005). He is a Drama League Directing Fellow, and his upcoming work includes Conor McPherson's *Port Authority* at the Atlantic Theater Company.

Believing this to be an important opportunity to tell a question-raising story in an election year, the star Los Angeles cast has set aside the schedule of this run to bring *Flags* to the heart of American theatre. This east-coast premiere of the award-winning LA production stars real-life husband and wife **Chris Mulkey** (*North Country*, *Radio*, and long-time vet of *Mixed Blood* in Minneapolis) and **Karen Landry** (*Patti Rocks*, *Six Feet Under*, Guthrie company alum, and long-time vet of *Mixed Blood* in Minneapolis); NY veteran **Stephen Mendillo** (Paul Newman's *Our Town*, *Empire Falls*); **Ryan Johnston**; and **Steven Klein**. The cast also includes **Ian Bedford**, **Kyle Johnston**, **Yvans Jourdain**, and **Quonta Beasley**. The design team for *Flags* includes **Kelly Hanson** (set), **Miriam Nilofa Crowe** (lights), **Graham Johnson** (sound), **Anne Kenney** (costume), and **Aaron Rhyne** (video). **Kelly Beaulieu** will stage manage.

Performances of *Flags* at 59e59 will begin on Wednesday night September 12 at 8:30pm in Theatre C. Performances then run until September 30, Tuesday through Saturday nights at 8:30pm with Sunday matinees on September 23 and September 30 at 3:30pm. Tickets to all shows are \$18 and can be purchased at the 59E59 Box Office, by phone at (212) 279-4200, or online at www.ticketcentral.com. Active and veteran military personnel receive a 10% discount via the discount code FLAG.

The Firefly Theater was founded in 1996 to mount new and classic plays while focusing on finding more rigorous ways to define and measure the success of theatrical ventures. Begun at Yale, the Firefly Theater moved to LA along with its founder, **Steven Klein**, where it has mounted productions from Mamet to Shephard to Shakespeare while continuing to investigate how best to structure a theater and its work to reduce costs and increase measurable impact in its community. Meanwhile, Klein has worked closely with fellow-Yalie Matt Shakman on his founding of the Black Dahlia Theatre, where Klein is Staff Producer and appears frequently as an actor. In total, Klein's LA theater with the Firefly Theater and Black Dahlia Theatre has earned over 20 awards along with mention in numerous critic's "best of" lists while helping the Black Dahlia get named "One of a dozen young American companies you need to know" by *American Theatre*. His LA theatre work also included the world-premiere of Geraldine Hughes' acclaimed *Belfast Blues*, which came to NY's Culture Project in 2005. Klein's work outside of LA includes award-winning productions in Boston, Philadelphia, Belfast, Off-West End London, and Off-Broadway. Firefly Theater today works with Firefly Films to nurture new American stories for the stage and screen. In addition, Firefly Theater is now in the early stages of building an integrated network of locally run, semi-autonomous theatres with a centralized mission and metrics of success and operating in physically identical spaces across America. More can be found at www.fireflyinc.com.

59E59 is located at 59 East 59th (between Madison and Park) in New York, NY 10022. 59E59 Theaters is a brand new, state-of-the-art theater complex in a spectacular location on 59th Street between Park and Madison Avenues in Manhattan. Owned and operated by the Elysabeth Kleinhans Theatrical Foundation, a not-for profit operating foundation, 59E59 Theaters has set an invigorating policy of bringing new, challenging and experimental work to a new neighborhood. 59E59 Theaters presents Off-Broadway and Off-Off Broadway productions by not-for-profit companies from across America and around the world, including an annual festival of new British theater called "Brits Off Broadway" and a preview of shows going to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe called "East to Edinburgh."

###

Theatre Festival); *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Falsettos* (Huntington Theatre Co.); *Indoor/Outdoor* (Hangar Theater). Opera credits include: *Madama Butterfly* (Connecticut Grand Opera); *A Month in the Country*, *La Finta Giardiniera* (Boston University Opera Institute). Kelly received her B.F.A. in Stage Management from Boston University.

CAROL ERSEVI ★★★★★★

(ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER)
Has been a Production Stage Manager and lighting and sound operator for almost 10 years in the Southern California area. She is a Resident Artist with VS Theatre Company (Credeaux Canvas, Modern Dance for Beginners, Navy Pier, Beggers in the House of Plenty, Waste of Shame, Eric Larue), an Associate Artist with Interact Theatre Company (A Little Night Music, The Three Sisters, Death of a Salesman, Our Town, Guys and Dolls), and a member in good standing with the Stage Managers' Association. Carole's most recent production was the West Coast Premiere of George Gershwin's *Tip Toes*, a piece that made its Broadway debut in 1925. Carole is currently in rehearsal with *A Deep Breath* and a Leap Productions/Interact Theatre Company's of John Patrick Shanley's *A Dreamer Examines His Pillow*. A special thanks to Johnny Clark for throwing her this bone, to Steven Klein for making it so easy to catch, and to her family for their unflagging love and support of her career choice.

KELLY HANSON ★★★★★★
(SET DESIGN)

Has been involved in a range of collaborations from downtown experimental to Broadway, and from Regional to International. Recent design credits include multiple productions with modern dance choreographer Monica Bill Barnes, *Fatboy* at Edinburgh Fringe and SoHo Thinktank, *Schiele* at HERE, and currently, a new work in progress by Bill Irwin. She spent several years as Associate Designer to Tony Walton, and in that capacity worked on such productions as American Ballet Theatre's *Sleeping Beauty* and the Broadway run of Lisa Kron's *Well*. She was awarded the first annual Rising Star Award in 2005 by *Entertainment Design Magazine* and USITT and she earned her MFA in Set Design from University of California, San Diego. Kelly is also Co-Artistic Director of Human Company, a physical theatre company dedicated to creating and producing new works. In August she mounted her first original piece, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, at chashama.

ANNE KENNEY ★★★★★★
(COSTUME DESIGN)

Has numerous design credits including the recent Anon for Atlantic Theater Company in New York City; *Urinetown* at St. Louis Repertory Theatre (Kevin Kline award), "Outstanding Costume Design in a Musical"; the feature film *"Fast Company"*; *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* at Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey; *Wonder of the World* at Barrington Stage Company; *Trying*, *Kimberly Akimbo* and *Retreat From Moscow* at Theaterworks, Hartford and *The Pillowman* at George Street Playhouse. Other costume design work includes *Dearest Eugenia Haggis* at the Ohio Theater, in New York City and the North American premier of *The Black Dahlia* at the Yale Repertory Theatre. www.annekenney.com

MIRIAM NILOFA CROWE ★★★★★★
(LIGHTING DESIGN)

Has recent credits including *Lila Downs Entre Copa y Copa* (US and European tour); *Hugh Masakela and Abdullah Ibrahim* (City Center); *Gidon Kremer* (Baryshnikov Arts Center); Ko-Ryo Dance Theater; Manhattan Children's Theatre; *Drilling Company*; *Beowulf* (Benjamin Bagby); *Phenomenon* and *The Strip* (Nerve); Princeton University; Columbia; *The Designated Mourner* (Cleveland Public Theater - sets,

lights and costumes); *The Safety Net* (Broken Watch); *Frag (TAR)*; *The Intelligent Design* of Jenny Chow (Yale Rep). She also designed for the Yale School of Drama, Yale Cabaret, BAM Next Wave, Juilliard, Fordham, Chautauqua Conservatory, Bermuda Festival, and Adirondack Theater Festival. www.wingspace.com/miriam

GRAHAM JOHNSON ★★★★★★

(SOUND DESIGN)
Has extensive New York credits, including: *Klonsky and Schwartz*, *Relativity*, and *Serenidib* at Ensemble Studio Theatre; *Elvis People* with EIP Productions at New World Stages; assistant on *In the Continuum* with Primary Stages; *Sealed for Freshness* at New World Stages; and *Treason* with Perry Street Theatre Company. Select regional credits with the award-winning Hippodrome State Theatre include: *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Blue Room*, *Dracula*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The War of the Worlds*, *Frozen*, *Macbeth*, *The Underpants*, *Headwig* and *The Angry Inch*, *Barf Boy*; *The Musical* and *Closer*.

AARON RHINE ★★★★★★
(VIDEO DESIGN)

is a director and video artist who founded the media/performance company Live Project with playwright Jason Pizzarello in 2002. Aaron's theatrical video designs include *Dutchman* (Cherry Lane); *The JAP Show* (Actors Temple); *Blood Cherries* (DTW and New World Theatre); *Topsy Turvy Mouse* (Cherry Lane); *The Magic Flute* (Ohio Northern); and various productions of *Saving the Greeks*. He is an active member of Caden Manson's Big Art Group and has toured with them all over the world with *The House of No More*, *Flicker*, and most recently *Dead Set*. Theatre directing credits include *InsideOut* (2006 Innovative Theatre Award nominee); *Playing House* (HERE); *Bent* (Columbia University); and *Glued to Grammy* (HERE). He additionally directs music videos and promotional materials for musicians and performing artists. He is a proud graduate of Fordham University at Lincoln Center. www.liveproject.org

THE FIREFLY THEATER ★★★★★★

Was founded in 1996 to mount new and classic plays while focusing on finding more rigorous ways to define and measure the success of theatrical ventures. Begun at Yale, the Firefly Theater moved to LA along with its founder, Steven Klein, where it has mounted productions from *Mame* to *Shephard* to *Shakespeare* while continuing to investigate how best to structure a theater and its work to reduce costs and increase measurable impact in its community. Firefly Theater today works with Firefly Films to nurture new American stories for the stage and screen. In addition, Firefly Theater is now in the early stages of building an integrated network of locally run, semi-autonomous theaters with a centralized mission and metrics of success and operating in physically identical spaces across America. More can be found at www.fireflyinc.com

SPECIAL THANKS SENT WARMLY TO: ★★★★★★

The Entire Staff of 59E59, The Black Dahlia Theatre (www.thedahlia.com), Tyson Belanger, Dianne Briennen, Jake Broder, Amy Brown, Johnny Clark, Chaplain Grover G. DeVault, Rev. Msgr. George Dobs, Retired Navy Chaplain, The Field, Gold Star Families, Ian Harrington, Geraldine Hughes, The NY Innovative Theatre Awards (www.nyitawards.com), Jef and Susan Johnston, John Long, Naomi Major Leslie, Beth Lemberger, John Long, Naomi Major and Robert R. McGinley, The Odysey Theatre (www.odyseytheatre.com), Captain Gary R. Politt, Chaplain Corps, U. S. Navy (Ret.), Amy Rath, Steven Schmidt, Jean Schneider, Fred Shahrad, Salma Shephard, David Shuster, Matt Simpson, Ken Werther

NEXT IN THEATER C OCTOBER 11 - NOVEMBER 4

THE INVISIBLE MAN
THE WAR OF THE WORLDS
THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU

Written and Directed by DAN BIANCHI
R. PATRICK ALBERTY, ELIZABETH BURKE,
PETER IASILLO, TOM LACEY, JERRY LAZAR,
PATRICK O'CONNOR, SARAH STEPHENS,
CASH TILTON and FRANK ZILINYI
\$25 (59E59 MEMBERS \$17.50)
Two different shows for \$40*
All four different shows \$75*
(*Must be purchased at the same time)

Radio Theatre
THE H.G. WELLS
SCIENCE FICTION
FESTIVAL



BUY TICKETS: IN PERSON AT 59E59 THEATERS BOX OFFICE 59 EAST 59TH STREET (PARK/MADISON) BY PHONE 212-279-4200 ONLINE AT WWW.TICKETCENTRAL.COM

LOVE THEATER? LOVE NEW YORK?
IF YOU DO ONE THING THIS YEAR
BECOME A MEMBER OF
59E59 THEATERS
NO.1 OFF BROADWAY!
JOIN THE BEST
THING TO HAPPEN TO
OFF-BROADWAY SINCE
OFF-BROADWAY!

MEMBERS RECEIVE:
30% OFF THE FULL TICKET PRICE
FOR ALL 59E59 SHOWS (UP TO SIX TICKETS PER SHOW)
SPECIAL DISCOUNTS ON ALL SHOWS PRESENTED
BY RESIDENT COMPANY, PRIMARY STAGES
BECOME A MEMBER TODAY
FOR ONLY \$59.59
15% DISCOUNT AT SELECT LOCAL RESTAURANTS
\$2 DISCOUNT ON ALL DRINKS AT THE EBAR
NO-FEE TICKET ORDERING BY PHONE
212-753-5959 EXT. 104
TICKET EXCHANGE UP TO 48 HOURS
PRIOR TO PERFORMANCE (SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY)
OR VISIT
WWW.59E59.ORG

ONLY LATE-NIGHT
THEATER BAR
IN TOWN!
SPECIALTY COCKTAILS, CHAMPAGNES
WINES, SINGLE MALT SCOTCHES
MEET YOUR FRIENDS ON THE MEZZANINE
TUESDAY - SUNDAY, 7 TILL LATE

ALTERNATE THURSDAYS AND SATURDAYS
AFTER 10 TILL LATE - ONLY AT THE EBAR with
GO DJ NIGHTS
DJ DAN FORTUNE DJ JUNIOR JAZZ LIVE JAZZ BAND

59E59 THEATER STAFF

- ELYSABETH KLEINHANS, President & Artistic Director
- PETER TEAR, Executive Producer
- STEPHANIE MERCADO, Theater Manager
- JAMES SPARNON, Production Manager
- COREY T. LIND, Facilities Manager
- GINGER DZERK, Ticketing Services Manager
- J. RYAN KIRK, Theater Technician
- SPONDEE, Theater Technician
- CHRISTINE HUERTAS, Theater Technician
- STEFEN JUNG, Business Manager
- MIRIAM GREEN, Assistant to the Executive Producer
- KAREN GRECO, Press Representative
- KELLY DAVIS, Press and Marketing Assistant
- KENNY NUNEZ, Deputy House Manager
- DIANNA LORA, Assistant to the Ticketing Services Manager
- BRIAN J. HECK, Box Office Supervisor
- ERIN SINGLETON, Box Office Supervisor
- NICOLA V. BUCK, Box Office Supervisor
- PETER CARRIER, Box Office Associate
- BRIAN HINDS, Box Office Associate
- JUSTIN MARURI, Box Office Associate
- ALBERTO ROSARIO, EBAR Assistant
- ANTHONY BAGNOLI, EBAR Staff
- WILFREDO FELIZ, Front of House Assistant
- ROSA FERNANDEZ, Usher
- LAUREN GORSTAYN, Usher
- JODIE MALDONADO, Usher
- COLLIN MCCONNELL, Usher
- STEPHANIE MORO, Usher
- JILLIAN OCASIO, Usher
- JORELL REYES, Usher
- JOSÉ RIVERA, Usher
- ADAM SMITH, Usher
- CANDY VAZQUEZ, Usher
- KYMM ZUCKERT, Lobby Attendant
- ERICK GOMEZ, Security
- "JUNIOR" GOMEZ, Facilities
- TAISHA ARENA, Housekeeping
- ANDRE HANNA, Housekeeping

This presentation is not a production of the Elysabeth Kleinhans Theatrical Foundation, Inc., which offers its facilities, when available, for productions by not-for-profit theater companies. For further information regarding licensing this theater or other theaters in this Theater Building, contact Peter Tear, Executive Producer. The use of cameras and other recording devices in this Theater is prohibited by law. There is no smoking in this Theater or any part of the Theater Building.

59

59

59 **THEATER C**



THE EAST COAST PREMIERE

FLAGS

BY JANE MARTIN
DIRECTED BY HENRY WISHCAMPER
PRODUCED BY STEVEN KLEIN and RYAN JOHNSTON

SEPTEMBER 12 - SEPTEMBER 30





PRESENTS

THE EAST COAST PREMIERE

FLAMES

BY JANE MARTIN
DIRECTED BY HENRY WISCHAMPER



FEATURING

EDDIE DESMOPOLIS
EM DESMOPOLIS
FRANKIE DESMOPOLIS
BENNY D'AMATO
CHAPLAIN, MAN 1 AND CHORUS MEMBER
MAJOR RASMUSSEN, MAN 2 AND CHORUS MEMBER
CURTIS FREMACK AND CHORUS MEMBER
CHORUS LEADER, CONGRESSMAN
AND THE MAN WHO DEMANDS
REPORTER AND CHORUS MEMBER

PRODUCED BY

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

STAGE MANAGER

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

SET DESIGN

COSTUME DESIGN

LIGHTING DESIGN

SOUND DESIGN

VIDEO DESIGN

WARDROBE ASSISTANT

VIDEO ASSISTANT



*Member of Actors' Equity Association. ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION (AEA) founded in 1913, represents more than 45,000 actors and stage managers in the United States. Equity seeks to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions, producing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO, and is affiliated with PIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. The Equity emblem is our mark of excellence. www.actorsequity.org

Photo credit: Philip Johnson

JANE MARTIN (PLAYWRIGHT)

Is a Kentuckian who first came to national attention for *Talking With*, a collection of monologues premiering in Actors Theatre of Louisville's 1981 Humana Festival of New American Plays. Since its New York premiere at Manhattan Theatre Club in 1982, *Talking With* has been performed around the world, winning Best Foreign Play of the Year award in Germany from *Theaterheute* magazine. Other Actors Theatre of Louisville premieres include: *Vital Signs* (1990 Humana Festival of New American Plays); *Cementville* (1991 Humana Festival); *Kelly and Du* (1993 Humana Festival), which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in Drama and won the American Theatre Critics Association Award for Best New Play; *Jack and Jill* (1996 Humana Festival), which won the 1996 American Theatre Critics Association Award for Best New Play; *Flaming Guns of the Purple Sage* (2001 Humana Festival), and *Good Boys*, which premiered at Guthrie Theater in 2002. Ms. Martin's most recent play, *Flags*, premiered at Mixed Blood Theatre Company in October 2004 and then ran in Los Angeles at the Odyssey Theater in 2005.

HENRY WISCHAMPER (DIRECTOR)

Has directed, among others, *Elvis People* (New World Stages); *The Polish Play, A Conflation of Macbeth* by William Shakespeare and *Ubu Roi* by Alfred Jarry (Kaiharis Theatre Company); *Pullman Car Hawatha* (Keen Company); Drama Desk Nomination for Outstanding Revival of a Play, *Time Our New York Top 10 Productions of 2004*; Scott Blumenthal's *So Frightful...* (McGinn/Cazale Theater, commissioned by the Maine Humanities Council); *The Good Thief* (Portland Stage Company); *The Flying Doctor* and *The Imaginary Cuckold* (Roundtable Ensemble); *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (HERE); *Romeo and Juliet*, *As You Like It* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Maine Summer Dramatic Institute/Shakespeare in Deering Oaks Park). He served as the assistant director on the Broadway productions of *Shining City* (directed by Robert Falls); *Absurd Person Singular* (directed by John Tillingier) and *Match* (directed by Nicholas Martin). Henry is the Artistic Director of Kaiharis Theatre Company. He served as the Artistic Director of the Maine Summer Dramatic Institute in Portland Maine from 1997-1999 and as the Artistic Associate of Keen Company from 2002-2005. He is a Drama League Directing Fellow. Upcoming: *Conor McPherson's Port Authority* at the Atlantic Theater Company.

CHRIS MULKEY

(EDDIE DESMOPOLIS)

Has been seen in dozens of films and television series. His theatre credits include the world premiere of *Flags* at the Mixed Blood and the Guthrie Theatre; the Los Angeles run of *Flags* at the Odyssey Theatre; La Mama Café, NY; a four-year stint as a company member at CIC, Minneapolis; and *Blue Window* at South Coast Repertory (LA Drama Critics' Circle Award). He has appeared in over 50 films to date, including: *"North Country"*, *"Radio"*, *"Broken Trail"* with Robert Duvall, *"Dreamland"*, *"First Blood"*, *"Joe vs. Wade"*, *"Gas-Food Lodging"*, independent Spirit Award nominee *"Patti Rocks"*, co-written by and co-starring with Karen Landry and *"Jimmy Zip"*. He has been a series regular on ABC's *"Twin Peaks"*, *"Any Day Now"* and Fox's *"Bakersfield P.D."* Currently, Chris is working on the new TNT series, *"Saving Grace"*, with Holly Hunter and on NBC's *"Friday Night Lights"*. With his band Blue Highway, Chris tours the country playing his original jump blues tunes. His latest CD is *Ride This One Out*, on Juicy Pear Records (Crowley, Louisiana).

KAREN LANDRY (EM DESMOPOLIS)

Originated Emma in the world premiere of *Flags* at Mixed Blood Theater and continued the role in Los Angeles in the award-winning run at the Odyssey Theatre, both times opposite her husband Chris Mulkey. A native of Minnesota, she began her career at the Guthrie Theater, where she spent over three years as a company member, playing roles such as Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Perdita in *A Winter's Tale*, Marianna in *Measure for Measure*, Minnie in *The Matchmaker*, Elaine in *Arsenic and Old Lace* and others, including recently starring as Analia in *The Darker Face of the Earth*. She has also performed many starring roles at Mixed Blood, South Coast Repertory, Denver Center, the Cricket Theater, San Jose Repertory, the Tony-winning Theatre De La Jeune Lune, the Ruskin Theater and Pacific Resident Theater, where she is a company member and where she has also directed *When They Speak of Rita*, by Daisey Foote and *Blast*, by Kate Axelrod. TV includes recurring parts on *"St. Elsewhere"*, *"Picket Fences"*, *"Six Feet Under"*, *"The Practice"*, *"JAG"* and *"Chicago Hope"*. She co-wrote and co-starred in the film *"Patti Rocks"*, along with Chris Mulkey, for which they were both nominated for Independent Spirit Awards. Other film includes roles in *"Live!"*, *"Bull Run"*, *"Sweetland"*, *"The Peaceful Warrior"*, *"Jimmy Zip"*, *"Amanda"* and *"The Personals"*, in which she starred.

STEPHEN MENDILLO

(BENNY D'AMATO)

Has appeared on Broadway several times, most recently in *Our Town* with Paul Newman. He played Martin in the long-running *Fool for Love* in New York, written and directed by Sam Shepard. He also played Leroy in the New York premiere of Arthur Miller's *The Last Yankee*. Stephen has appeared in many television series, including *"Law and Order"* and the HBO mini-series *"Empire Falls"*. He has an MFA in drama from Yale and is a member of The Actors Studio.

RYAN JOHNSTON

(PRODUCER / FRANKIE DESMOPOLIS)

Began his work in acting, directing, and producing while studying theatre and vocal music at the University of Nebraska, and continued over six years producing Sam Shepard's rarely staged early work *The Unseen Hand* (Firefly Theater), developing a workshop production of *Julius Caesar* (Firefly Theater); playing *Trinculo* in *The Tempest* (The Ark Theatre); producing *Measure for Measure* (Waging Theatre); and starring in Jane Martin's *Flags* at the Odyssey Theatre opposite Chris Mulkey, Karen Landry and Stephen Mendillo. Early last year Johnston workshoped and starred in the world-premiere of *Forewell* Miss Corfan, by Keith Josef Adkins, at the Black Dahlia Theatre. Television credits include: *"The District"* (CBS) and *"To Live and Die in LA"* (pilot). Johnston has developed a series of Shakespeare workshops aimed at bringing the text of Shakespeare alive in the modern day. He cites The Eric Morris Actor's Workshop (Method), Bruce Kaizman (Chekov), and Shakespeare and Company (Voice and Text) among his most profound training experiences. Johnston most recently completed production on an exciting project about which he cannot speak due to an NDA. He currently resides in and loves New York, but he misses LA and the people and cat who live there.

STEVEN KLEIN

(PRODUCER / CHAPLAIN, MAN 1 AND CHORUS MEMBER)

First founded and produced under the Firefly Theater while at Yale. Shortly after moving to LA, he founded

the Firefly Theater there and worked closely with fellow-Yale Matt Shakman on his founding of the acclaimed Black Dahlia Theatre, where Steven is Staff Producer and appears frequently as an actor. In total, his LA theatre work has earned over 20 awards along with mention in numerous critic's "best of" lists. His LA theatre work also included the world-premiere of Geraldine Hughes' acclaimed *Belfast Blues*, which came to New York's Culture Project in 2005. Steven's theater acting and producing outside of LA has included award-winning productions in his hometown of Boston, and in Philadelphia, Belfast, Off-West End London and Off-Broadway. Wanting to make films with the same level of interaction across disciplines as theater, Steven co-founded a film collective with Bruce Cohen, Academy Award-winning producer of *American Beauty*. This group of filmmakers collaboratively made over 35 shorts from 2001 - 2005. With numerous projects growing from these, Steven founded Firefly Films (www.fireflyfilm.com), which works hand-in-hand with Firefly Theater. Having completed several award-winning shorts and a spec pilot involving name producers, actors and directors, Firefly Films is now developing its first feature films.

IAN BEDFORD

(MAJOR RASMUSSEN, MAN 2 AND CHORUS MEMBER)

Recently played Sullen in *The Beaux Stratagem* and Tyrrel in *Richard III*, both directed by Michael Kahn at the Shakespeare Theatre Co. in Washington, DC. Credits also include: *Our Town* and *The Cosmanov's Last Message...* at La Jolla Playhouse; *Moby Dick Rehearsed* at Guild Hall; *Metamorphoses* at Florida Studio Theatre; *Richard III* and *As You Like It* at Shakespeare Santa Cruz; the title role in *Henry V* at both the Pennsylvania and Marin Shakespeare Festivals (where he won a Drama-Logue Award); *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *Henry IV Part 1* (at Penn Shakes); and three seasons with the Utah Shakespeare Festival. In NY, he has appeared in *Rue* and *Below the Belt* at Theatre for the New City and as Frankenstein's Creature in *So Frightful an Event*. Other credits include *Boesman and Lena* directed by Ahlo Fugard; *Faust Fragments* directed by Briton Kulick and *Icarus* / *Mother* directed by Les Waters. On TV, Ian recurs as Officer Bamford on *"Law and Order: S.V.U."* and has also appeared on *"Guiding Light"*, *"One Life to Live"* and *"Nash Bridges"*, Ian earned his M.F.A. from UCSD and his B.A. from Yale.

KYLE JOHNSTON

(CONGRESSMAN'S AIDE, PATRIOTIC SPEAKER, CURTIS FREMACK AND CHORUS MEMBER)

Received his degree in Theatre Performance from the University of Nebraska. He most recently starred in the feature film *"Pieces of Eight"* and appeared in the award-winning short film *"The Problem With Percival"*, directed by Seth Gordon and produced by Steven Klein via Firefly Films. He has worked with the Nebraska Repertory Theatre and the Krakowski Reminiscence Theatre, and he received acclaim in Los Angeles for his performances as Willie in *Sam Shepard's The Unseen Hand* (Firefly Theater) and as H-Bomb in the premier of *Waste of Shame* (VS. Theatre Company). He resides in Los Angeles.

IVANS JOURDAIN

(CHORUS LEADER, CONGRESSMAN AND THE MAN WHO DEMANDS)

Is thrilled to be back in New York working with such a talented team of players in the east coast premiere of Jane Martin's *Flags*. Born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Ivans moved to Asbury Park, NJ at five years of age and went on to get his BA at Rutgers University and his MFA at Arizona State University, under the wing of famed director Marshall Mason. Ivans is

an extremely versatile actor who has appeared in film, television, commercials and theater. His theater credits include *Flags*, *Dorian*, *Box*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Cymbeline*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Macbeth*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *A Few Good Men*, *Twelve Angry Men* and *Camino Real*. Ivans currently recurs as Greg on the FX TV series *"The Riches"*, starring Eddie Izzard and Minnie Driver, and will appear later this fall on *"October Road"*. Other TV credits include *"Grey's Anatomy"*, *"My Name Is Earl"*, *"Shark"*, *"Jericho"*, *"Monk"* and *"The Shield"*. He is represented by Liz Hanley at Bicoastal Talent and Literary Agency in Los Angeles. Ivans gives thanks to his family and friends for their unwavering support and to the love energy, which makes all things possible.

QUONTA BEASLEY

(REPORTER AND CHORUS MEMBER)

Is pleased to be performing with the Firefly Theater. She was recently seen in the Faux Real Theatre's Production of Suzan-Lori Parks' *365 Plays* produced in collaboration with The Public Theatre. She also was seen as Lady MacDuff/Gentlewoman in The Classical Theatre of Harlem's *Macbeth*. Other plays with CTH include: *The Blacks*, *Medea*, *Hamlet* and a staged reading of *Trojan Women* produced by BAM's Next Wave series. Other favorite roles include: Lolola Playhouse/UCSD: Hester in *Fuckin' A*; Death/Mother-in-Law in *Blood Wedding*; *Current Nobody*, directed by Daniel Aukin; and Topsy in *I Ain't Yo Uncle*, directed by Bill Fennelly/Film/TV appearances include: *"Bad Company"*, *"Steppin'"*, *"Oz"*, *"Law and Order"*, *"Paper Soldiers"* and *"The Guru"*. She is a 2006 MFA graduate of the University of California, San Diego.

ZACH LOMBARDO

(ASSOCIATE PRODUCER)

Is thrilled to be working on this wonderful production with such a dedicated team. His recent accomplishments have included summer stock in the Berkshires, where he worked with Michael Moraita at the Theatre Barn to play Mohammed in Charles Busch's *The Tale of the Allergists' Wife* and Frankie Salvucci in Tom Dulack's *Breaking Legs*.

NICK MICOZZI

(ASSOCIATE PRODUCER)

Is originally from northeast Ohio, where he founded Pradigal Theatre Group. In New York, he has been a member of Esperance Theatre Company, Pure Pop Rep and The Splinter Group. He trained and worked with Jim Slowtak (Grotowski's Objective Drama) and Shakespeare and Co. in Lenox, MA. Acting credits include FringeNYC, The Chekhov Vaudeville Festival, The Pure Pop 2000 Festival, Yballin Romeo and *Juliet*, Pompey and (separately) Lucio in *Measure for Measure*, Bernard in *Death of a Salesman*, Sam in *Perry Verse*, Luka in *The Bear*, and Iago in *Othello*. Recently, Nick played Tom in Patrice Johnson's film *"King's County"*. Nick's Off-Broadway producer credits include The Pure Pop Theatre Festival, The Chekhov Vaudeville Festival and Trojan Productions' *The Iliad*. He is the founder of the free Off-Broadway listings site, NYstage.com, and is currently acting, directing and producing with HofHouse Productions.

KELLY BEAULIEU

(PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER)

Has many New York credits, including: *The Voyage Inheritance* (Atlantic Theater Co.); *Our Leading Lady* (Manhattan Theater Company); *The Polish Play: A Conflation of Macbeth and Ubu Roi* (Kaiharis Theatre Company); *Drug Buddy* (stageARM); Regional: *The Front Page*, *The Corn is Green*, *Opposite of Sex*, *Anything Goes*, *On the Razzle*, *Lady Windermere's Fan* (Williamstown

PRESS HIGHLIGHTS FOR

FLAGS

BY JANE MARTIN

DIRECTED BY HENRY WISHCAMPER

FIREFLY THEATER AT 59E59

OFF-BROADWAY, NY

SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER, 2007

"The play skillfully explores the frustration suffered by ordinary Americans over the war, whatever their positions...the heartfelt passion of the piece is undeniable, and the performers, particularly the two leads, deliver great conviction and intensity."

New York Post

"...Strong performances by the talented cast..."

The New Yorker

"...a fine production by Firefly Theater....All the actors are excellent, with special praise due to Chris Mulkey and Karen Landry as grieving parents..."

Chelsea/Clinton News

"...performances, under Henry Wishcamper's direction, are nothing short of stunning...The evening couldn't have provided me with a more timely and potent merging of politics and theater."

Epoch Times

"...FLAGS is a refreshing dose of daring, urgent and thought-provoking theater. "

NYU News

"...the timing of the East Coast premiere of Jane Martin's FLAGS becomes even more disturbingly appropriate...FLAGS brutally depicts a nation divided and still eagerly waiting for its sons and daughters to return home."

Backstage

"...strong and riveting..."

CurtainUp

"...compelling...FLAGS is a show worth seeing, for the issues it raises and for the sterling work of Mulkey as a man who refuses to surrender his beliefs."

nytheatre.com

"...director Henry Wishcamper's production moves with graceful fluidity, thanks to Kelly Hanson's ingenious set design."

theatremania

From Cover and all of F8 in the LA Times Calendar on Sunday 8/26/07.

Full text follows from latimes.com.

Los Angeles Times

CALENDAR

MOVIES • TV • STYLE

Sunday, August 26, 2007

calendar@latimes.com

THEATER

War's slow spread onto stage

A dramatic battle to bring war onto stage

By Hank Mitton

AFTER more than four years of bloody combat, multiple treaties and multiple losses of life endured by U.S. servicemen and women, the war in Iraq has yet to produce significant American stage drama. But one candidate might be the sleek, tightly scripted "Flags" by the playwrights Jesse Martin, which ran for three months at the 46-seat Odyssey Theater in Los Angeles in 2003 and is headed for New York with much of that cast reunited for the premiere.

The booking is a limited engagement and results at the result of Broadway since 2003, but the play's momentum, which includes its strong Los Angeles producers, have hopes that this belated New York premiere could lead to something bigger.

The strange case of Jesse Martin

THE play was commissioned by the Odyssey in 2001, but because of scheduling conflicts was given its first staging at 2003 at Minneapolis' Mixed Blood Theater, where Mulkey and Landry created the roles of Eddie and Kim. Considering its topicality, generally good reviews and successful run at the Odyssey, the question arises why no other theater in New York or elsewhere has found a space for "Flags" in the last two years.

Steven Klein, the 35-year-old stage producer at L.A.'s Black Dublin Theater who is producing "Flags" under his separate Purple Theater banner with business partner Ryan Johnston, believes the reason has largely to do with the strange case of Jesse Martin. While most playwrights are eagerly competing to get their works seen and staged, "Jesse Martin" remains an enigmatic persona, avoiding a writer who doesn't want his or her true identity known and whose assumed agent is said to live in rural Kentucky and be nearly uncontactable.

Many in the theater have long believed Martin to be Jon Jory, the former head of the Actors Theater of Louisville who established that theater's renowned New American Play Festival and who has taught in the drama department at the University of Washington since 2000. Jon Jory, who reportedly directed the premiere of all Martin's plays at Louisville and still serves as a liaison to the playwright, refuses to discuss it, and the producers and actors associated with "Flags" officially abide by the rules of the 35-year literary contract.

"There's a primary issue, and we want to respect that," says Klein, who also says, "As soon as I started talking people I wanted to get the rights to produce a Jesse Martin play in New York, the Shakespeare Institute was written." His friends in the theater said it would never happen. The only Martin play ever done in New York was his first, the widely produced "Talking With," a series of monologues for women done at the Manhattan Theater Club in 2002 after debuting the year before at Actors Theater of Louisville, where most of the playwright's works have premiered.

In the intervening 2 1/2 decades, at least 10 more plays by "Jesse Martin" have emerged. Two of them, "Kelly and Du" and "Dark and Light," won the Best New Play Award from the American Theater Critics Assn. "Kelly and Du" was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 2003. But no productions in New York. As the whole, Martin has never made a public appearance or given an interview.

"The assumption," says Klein, "is that Jesse Martin is a resident of New York State." Nevertheless, with "Flags" in mind, Klein and Johnston thought, why not try? A native of Boston and a Yale graduate, Klein, in addition to producing and writing in several successful shows at the Black Dublin, in 2004 and 2005 took Creative Flagler's one-woman show "Buffalo Blues" in London and Belfast, banking producing experience along the way.

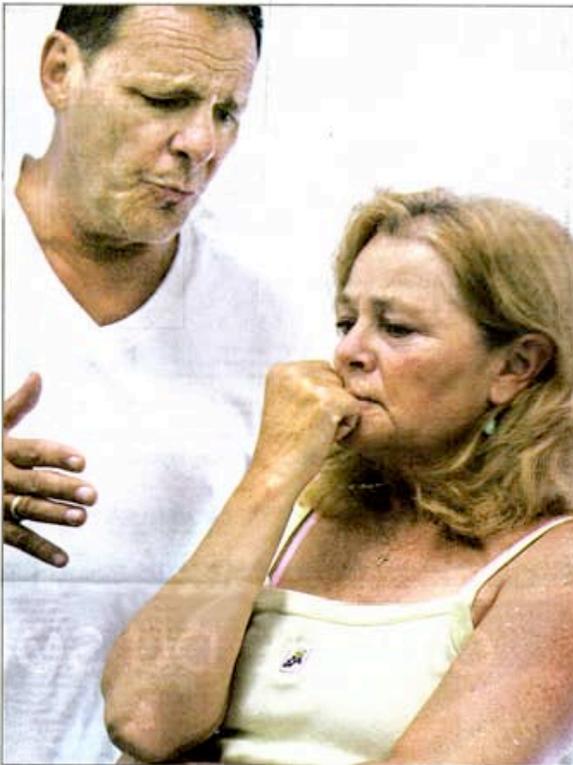
Raising 'Flags'

KLEIN first want to see "Flags" at the Odyssey because Johnston, his friend, was in the cast, playing Freddie, the younger son. He went back to see it three more times. "I loved the piece," he says. "I was so moved." Johnston learned that on one had the rights to the play in New York. They began their campaign to get the rights. Johnston, producing the premiere in Manhattan to find a theater while seeking Jory's counsel and the phone from Seattle. Klein made the connection with SEBKA a nonprofit theater intended to provide abandoned stage space for new and experimental work. AD that remained was to hire a theater space able to provide the Berkeley back country to get a signature from Martin representative to see the deal. Or so the story goes.

With the built-in subsidy provided by SEBKA, Klein and Johnston estimate that they can open the three-week run of "Flags" in depth. It is far less than a third of the \$75,000 it would take otherwise. "There is no money allocated for publicity, advertising or marketing."

The five-figure budget also requires a cast that believes in the play enough to work for little. "People who care about this play are making revenue sacrifices," Johnston says.

The nine-member ensemble will include Seattle Johnston and Klein; Mulkey and Landry,



"FLAGS" (clockwise from top) actors Chris Mulkey and Karen Landry will reprise their roles as a working-class couple whose lives come askew when they learn their son has been killed in Iraq. At far left, co-producer Steven Klein watches rehearsals with director Henry Wilkinson; at left, actor Steven Mendillo works on a scene from the play, which is headed for an off-Broadway run in September.

Photograph by Ben White for LATimes

Johnston's brother Kyle, and Stephen Mendillo, the lauded character actor who was in the cast at the Odyssey and last appeared on Broadway in Paul Verhoeven's movie of "Our Town."

The production, to be directed by Henry Wachover, a fellow Yale grad who assisted Robert Falls directing the Broadway production of Censor MilPerron's "Whisper City" and will also direct the premiere of McPherson's "Port Authority" in New York.

The problem of the play, even while Klein and Johnston believe there to be untapped, seems to matter a lot to Mulkey and Landry, who are from the generation that fought and perished in Vietnam War.

"It's getting to be something that's important," says Landry, who turned down a movie offer to do the play in Minneapolis the first time.

During an interview at the Black Dublin, where the company was rehearsing before heading east, Mulkey grabbed a guitar and played his own folk blues song with the message that the Iraq war was Vietnam all over again.

"I'm pro-American," Mulkey says gruffly while reading his military high school background and stomach operation to being sent to Vietnam. He

sees the treason in 2001. Mulkey says he met President Bush on a road asking him to consider Saudi Arabia instead. He got a response, thanking him for his opinion.

The role of Eddie, the ill-fated warrior who commits public demand to take down the American flag he impulsively holds upside down as a tribute to his fallen son, has the size and love that rolls out to an actor with Mulkey's reservoir of fury even as it tests the audience.

"It's such an intense piece," Mulkey says. "When we did it at Mixed Blood, there was a nervousness among the cast that someone was going to jump up onstage and take issue with the play. I was ready for that."

It never happened.

As to why a play with such ongoing relevance and emotional weight has not seen much production on regional stages, Michael Klein, the former literary manager of the Dublin who co-wrote "Flags," responds, "Is that a rhetorical question?" Then he adds, "Obviously the American theater isn't going to break any new ground on the subject."

"Flags," which in 2003 could have been seen as a direct response to the government's then pro-

mission on photographing the flag covered rifles being sent back from Iraq, stands as an exception — even if in this point a minor one. But even the look of things around the country, Iraq may not be an exception for much longer.

Not counting David Hare's "Stuff Happens" (British) done at the Mark Taper Forum two years ago and "Black Watch," a drama about a British regiment in Iraq, coming to UCLA's Byrne Hall in the fall, few American plays dealing with the war include the revised "Flying City" by Christopher Shinn, at Lincoln Center, Craig Lucas' "A Prayer for My Enemy," now onstage at the Intiman in Seattle, "Whisper Home, Jimmy Butler" by Julia Marie Myatt, scheduled for next year at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the Kennedy Center, and "Hard 17" by Jessica Goldring, opening at Florida Stage Company.

In the original script of "Flags," Eddie makes reference to the number of Americans dead as "one hundred." By the time of the Odyssey production, the line had to be changed to "two thousand." Here in New York, it will be changed again, to "thirty seven hundred," a clear indication that the war has not stopped coming home, in the news or on the stage.

Los Angeles Times



'Flags': A small victory in bringing Iraq war to stage

Husband-and-wife actors Chris Mulkey and Karen Landry will reprise their roles as a couple whose lives come unhinged with the news that their oldest son has been killed in Iraq.

(Photographs by Ken Hively/LAT)

By Sean Mitchell
Special to The Times

August 26, 2007

After more than four years of bloody chaos, roadside bombs and multiple tours of duty endured by U.S. servicemen and women, the war in Iraq has yet to produce a signature American stage drama. But one candidate might be the Greek tragedy-inspired "Flags" by the pseudonymous Jane Martin, which ran for three months at the 99-seat Odyssey Theater in Los Angeles in 2005 and is headed for New York with much of that cast reunited for the occasion.

The booking is a limited engagement next month at the small off-Broadway venue 59E59, but the play's champions, which include its young Los Angeles producers, have hopes that this belated New York premiere could lead to something bigger.

Husband-and-wife actors Chris Mulkey and Karen Landry will reprise their roles as Eddie and Em Desmopoulos, a working-class couple whose lives come unhinged when a military chaplain shows up at their door with the news that their oldest son has been killed in Iraq. Mulkey, the endearingly rough-hewn character actor who is about to be seen as the new coach on NBC's "Friday Night Lights," in "Flags" plays an angry Vietnam vet and garbage man whose patriotic disposition is sorely challenged by his discovery that the military has lied to him about the circumstances surrounding his son's death.

Landry, a former member of Minneapolis' Guthrie Theater acting company who appeared on "Six Feet Under" and "St. Elsewhere," returns as the mother who must accept the unthinkable while wrangling an inconsolable reformed alcoholic husband from "going postal." A four-member chorus intrudes to comment on the events as news footage of the war and media coverage play in the background.

The strange case of Jane Martin

The play was commissioned by the Guthrie in 2003, but because of scheduling conflicts was given its first staging in 2004 at Minneapolis' Mixed Blood Theater, where Mulkey and Landry created the roles of Eddie and Em. Considering its topicality, generally good notices and successful run at the Odyssey, the question arises why no other theater, in New York or elsewhere, has found a space for "Flags" in the last two years.

Steven Klein, the 31-year-old staff producer at L.A.'s Black Dahlia Theatre who is producing "Flags" under his separate Firefly Theater banner with business partner Ryan Johnston, believes the reason has largely to do with the strange case of Jane Martin. While most playwrights are eagerly competing to get their works seen and staged, "Jane Martin" remains an enigmatic persona shielding a writer who doesn't want his or her true identity known and whose unnamed agent is said to live in rural Kentucky and be nearly unreachable.

Many in the theater have long believed Martin to be Jon Jory, the former head of the Actors Theater of Louisville who established that theater's celebrated New American Play Festival and who has taught in the drama department at the University of Washington since 2000. Yet Jory, who coincidentally directed the premieres of all Martin's plays at Louisville and still serves as a liaison to the playwright, refuses to discuss it, and the producers and actors associated with "Flags" dutifully abide by the rules of the 26-year literary conceit.

"There's a privacy issue, and we want to respect that," says Klein, who also says, "As soon as I started telling people I wanted to get the rights to produce a Jane Martin play in New York, the Sisyphian narrative was written." His friends in the theater said it would never happen. The only Martin play ever done in New York was her first, the widely produced "Talking With," a series of monologues for women done at the Manhattan Theater Club in 1982 after debuting the year before at Actors Theater of Louisville, where most of the playwright's works have premiered.

In the intervening 2 1/2 decades, at least 10 more plays by "Jane Martin" have emerged. Two of them, "Kelly and Du" and "Jack and Jill," won the Best New Play Award from the American Theater Critics Assn. "Kelly and Du" was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 1993. But no productions in New York. All the while, Martin has never made a public appearance or given an interview.

"The assumption," says Klein, "is that Jane Martin is resentful of New York theater."

Nevertheless, with "Flags" in mind, Klein and Johnston thought, why not try? A native of Boston and a Yale graduate, Klein, in addition to producing and acting in several successful shows at the Black Dahlia, in 2004 and 2005 took Geraldine Hughes' one-woman show "Belfast Blues" to London and Belfast, banking producing experience along the way.

Raising 'Flags'

Klein first went to see "Flags" at the Odyssey because Johnston, his friend, was in the cast, playing Frankie, the younger son. He went back to see it three more times. "I loved the piece," he says.

When he and Johnston learned that no one had the rights to the play in New York, they began their campaign to get the rights themselves, pounding the pavement in Manhattan to find a theater while seeking Jory's counsel over the phone from Seattle. Klein made the connection with 59E59, a nonprofit venue created to provide discounted stage space for new and experimental work. All that remained was to hire a courier service able to penetrate the Kentucky back country to get a signature from Martin's representative to seal the deal. Or so the story goes.

With the built-in subsidy provided by 59E59, Klein and Johnston estimate that they can open the three-week run of "Flags" on Sept. 12 for less than a third of the \$75,000 it would take otherwise. There is no money allotted for publicity, advertising or marketing.

The bare-bones budget also requires a cast that believes in the play enough to work for little. "People who care about this play are making extreme sacrifices," Johnston says.

The nine-member ensemble will include (besides Johnston and Klein) Mulkey and Landry, Johnston's brother Kyle, and Stephen Mendillo, the talented character actor who was in the cast at the Odyssey and last appeared on Broadway in Paul Newman's revival of "Our Town."

The production is being directed by Henry Wishcamper, a fellow Yale grad who assisted Robert Falls directing the Broadway production of Conor McPherson's "Shining City" and will also direct the premiere of McPherson's "Port Authority" in New York.

The politics of the play, even while Klein and Johnston believe them to be ambiguous, seem to matter a lot to Mulkey and Landry, who are from the generation that fought and protested the Vietnam War.

"I'm getting to do something that's important," says Landry, who turned down a movie offer to do the play in Minneapolis the first time.

During an interview at the Black Dahlia, where the company was rehearsing before heading east, Mulkey grabbed a guitar and played his own talking-blues song with the message that the Iraq war was Vietnam all over again.

"I'm pro-America," Mulkey says gruffly while recalling his military high school background and staunch objection to being sent to Vietnam. Before the invasion in 2003, Mulkey says he sent President Bush an e-mail asking him to consider Saudi Arabia instead. He got a response, thanking him for his opinion.

The role of Eddie, the blinkered warrior who resists public demand to take down the American flag he mistakenly hoists upside down as a tribute to his fallen son, has the size and force that calls out to an actor with Mulkey's reservoir of fury even as it baits the audience.

"It's such an intense play," Mulkey says. "When we did it at Mixed Blood, there was a nervousness among the cast that someone was going to jump up onstage and take issue with the play. I was ready for that."

It never happened.

As to why a play with such ongoing relevance and emotional wattage has not been much produced on regional stages, Michael Dixon, the former literary manager at the Guthrie who commissioned "Flags," responds, "Is that a rhetorical question?" Then he adds, "Evidently the American theater isn't going to break any news on the subject."

"Flags," which in 2004 could have been seen as a direct response to the government's then prohibition on photographing the flag-covered coffins being sent back from Iraq, stands as an exception -- even if to this point a minor one. But from the look of things around the country, it may not be an exception for much longer.

Not counting David Hare's "Stuff Happens" (British) done at the Mark Taper Forum two years ago and "Black Watch," a drama about a Scottish regiment in Iraq, coming to UCLA's Royce Hall in the fall, new American plays dealing with the war include the recent "Dying City" by Christopher Shinn, at Lincoln Center; Craig Lucas' "A Prayer for My Enemy," now onstage at the Intiman in Seattle; "Welcome Home, Jenny Sutter" by Julie Marie Myatt, scheduled for next year at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the Kennedy Center; and "Ward 57" by Jessica Goldberg, upcoming at Florida Stage Company.

In the original script of "Flags," Eddie makes reference to the number of American dead as "nine hundred." By the time of the Odyssey production, the line had to be changed to "two thousand." Now, in New York, it will be changed again, to "thirty-seven hundred," a clear indication that the war has not stopped coming home, in the news or on the stage.